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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the attitudes of college administrators in the Southeast toward different types of publications when an academician is considered for promotion. An instrument was designed around 10 selected avenues of publication including nationally, regionally, and institutionally refereed journals, national and regional magazines read by the general public, books published by a commercial firm, books published by the author through a vantage press, and conferences related to the professor's discipline. Administrators at colleges and universities randomly selected from Lovejoy's College Guide were asked to respond to each of the 10 items on the basis of a bipolar adjective--significant to insignificant. Results were rank ordered and an analysis of variance was run on three demographic items (enrollment, highest degree offered, and support) and the 10 selected avenues of publication. When demographic data were disregarded, college administrators ranked a nationally refereed journal directly related to the professor's discipline as being the most significant publication when the promotion of an individual is being considered. (Author/CWM)

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SOUTHEASTERN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS' ATTITUDES TOWARD SELECTED AVENUES OF PUBLICATION

by

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Southeastern College and University Administrators' Attitudes Toward Selected Avenues of Publication

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Abstract

The traditional refereed journal has competition. Some academicians are seeking other avenues of publication. However, do college administrators view these new avenues in the same light as the refereed journal when a professor is considered for promotion?

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of college administrators in the Southeast toward different types of publications when an academician is considered for promotion. An instrument was designed around ten (10) selected avenues of publication including nationally, regionally and institutionally refereed journals, national and regional magazines read by the general public, books published by a commercial firm, books published by the author through a vantage press, and conferences related to the professor's discipline. College administrators were asked to respond to each of the ten (10) items on the basis of a bipolar adjective--significant (5) to insignificant (1). Colleges and universities were randomly selected from Lovejoy's College Guide. Results are rank ordered and an analysis of variance was run on three demographic items (enrollment, highest degree offered and support) and the ten selected avenues of publication. When demographic data are disregarded, college administrators ranked a nationally refereed journal directly related to the professor's discipline as being the most significant publication when the promotion of an individual is considered.

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Introduction

Recently, a variety of avenues have become available to the academician who wishes to publish. Among these are nationally refereed journals, regionally refereed journals, institutionally and/or state refereed journals, national periodicals produced for the general reader, regional periodicals produced primarily for the general reader, journals which accept articles (with editorial assistance) on the basis of paid subscriptions, textbooks published by a vantage press, textbooks published by a commercial firm, reports accepted into the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) and conference presentations at national and regional meetings.

It appears that the publishing aspects of academic life have changed for a number of reasons. The Association of American Publishers (1) has expressed a concern about rising cost, tighter markets, and declining enrollments. Alternatives such as demand publishing have been recognized (2) as a viable way of disseminating research, providing customized textbooks for specialized courses, and coping with the inadequate ability of the university presses to meet the needs of higher education (3). ERIC's distinguished history certainly has made it a part and parcel of the body of literature of education.

However, many academicians question the value of non-refereed sources. Traditionally college administrators have viewed only refereed publications when the promotion of a faculty member is considered. Is this still an accurate axiom?

This study was designed to answer four empirical questions. First, how do college administrators rank selected methods of publication relative to promotion of faculty? Second, is there a significant difference among college administrators, categorized by highest degree offered, among the ten methods of publication relative to promotion of faculty? Third, is there a significant difference between college administrators of publicly and privately supported institutions relative to the ten methods of publication when members

of the faculty are considered for promotion? Fourth, is there a significant difference among college administrators from various size institutions (enrollment) when these ten methods of publication are considered relative to promotion of various faculty members?

Promotion in this study is considered to mean advancement in professorial rank. For example, advancement from the rank of instructor to the rank of assistant professor or from the rank of assistant professor to associate professor.

An instrument was developed focusing on ten (10) methods of publication. These are:

Item 1 - an article appearing in a nationally refereed journal directly related to the professor's discipline;

Item 2 - an article appearing in a regionally refereed journal directly related to the professor's discipline;

Item 3 - an article appearing in an institutionally or state refereed journal directly related to the professor's discipline;

Item 4 - an article appearing in a national periodical produced primarily for general reader consumption accepting articles on the basis of reader popularity;

Item 5 - an article appearing in a regional periodical produced primarily for general reader consumption accepting articles on the basis of reader popularity;

Item 6 - an article appearing in a journal which accepts articles (with editorial assistance) on the basis of paid subscriptions;

Item 7 - a textbook published by a vantage press (author or institution guarantees cost of the book before publication);

Item 8 - a textbook published by a commercial firm that meets publication costs on the basis of anticipated sales;

Item 9 - a report that is accepted into the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) network; and,

Item 10 - a conference presentation at a regional or national meeting of the professor's discipline.

Subjects were asked to respond on the basis of a bipolar adjective--significant (5) to insignificant (1). Three demographic items were included on the instrument. These were enrollment, support and highest degree offered.

Three hundred fifty (350) instruments were mailed to college administrators randomly selected in 12 Southeastern states of Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, Arkansas, Mississippi, Virginia, Kentucky, West Virginia, Florida and Louisana. Names were selected form Lovejoy's College Guide (4). Letters were addressed to the dean of faculties. A cover letter was enclosed explaining the study and insuring the complete anonymity of the participants. A total of 187 questionnaires were returned representing a 53.4% return.

Presentation and Analysis of Findings

When demographic data of responding institutions were disregarded, college administrators rated the acceptance of an article appearing in a nationally refereed journal directly related to the professor's discipline as being the most significant when the promotion of an individual is considered. A presentation at a regional or national conference within the professor's discipline was rated second among the ten (10) items.

An article appearing in a journal which accepts articles on the basis of paid subscriptions (with editorial assistance) was ranked lowest in value among the ten items. Articles appearing in regional periodicals produced primarily for general reader consumption accepting articles on the basis of reader popularity and textbooks published by a vantage press also received very low ratings. The mean rating and rank of each of the ten (10) items is included in Table I. It is noted that the lowest mean rating on the ten (10) items was 2.47, only slightly below average. This indicates that some significance is given to each of the forms of publication.

Table I

A Rank-order of College Administrator's Perception of Selected Publications as They Related to Promotion

Item number	Item	Mean	Rank
1	An article appearing in a nationally refereed journal directly related to the professor's discipline	3.94	1
10	A conference presentation at a regional or national meeting of the professor's discipline	3.75	2
8	A textbook published by a commercial firm that meets publication cost on the basis of anticipated sales	3.72	3
2	An article appearing in a regionally refereed journal directly related to the professor's discipline	3.65	4
9	A report that is accepted into the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)	3.49	5
3	An article appearing in an institutionally or state refereed journal directly related to the professor's discipline	3.29	6
4	An article appearing in a national periodical produced primarily for general reader consumption--accepting articles on the basis of popularity	3.08	7
5	An article appearing in a regional periodical produced primarily for general reader consumption accepting articles on the basis of reader popularity	2.88	8
7	A textbook published by a vantage press	2.85	9
8	An article appearing in a journal which accepts articles on the basis of paid subscriptions	2.47	10

An analysis of variance was computed for the ten (10) items in the questionnaire across each of the demographic classifications: highest degree offered, support and enrollment. Results from the oneway analysis of variance when comparisons were made on the ten (10) items between responses of administrators from publicly and privately supported institutions showed no significant difference for all items at the .05 level of significance.

A oneway analysis of variance was computed which compared selected methods of publication with institutions categorized by enrollment (Table 2). Significant differences at the .05 level appeared only in item 1 and item 9. The highest mean rating appearing in item 1 is 4.2/ in the category identifying institutions having an enrollment of 4,501 or more. Conversely, institutions having an enrollment of 500 or less gave item 1 and item 9 the lowest ratings of 3.20 and 2.75 respectively. Item 9 received the highest mean score from institutions having an enrollment of 501 to 1,000 students. In general, mean ratings increased when the size of the institution was greater than 500 in enrollment.

Selected Methods of Publication	Df Between Groups	Df Within Groups	F Ratio	Significance	Group 1 Mean (En. Less 500)	Group 2 Mean (En. 501-1000)	Group 3 Mean (En. 1001-1500)	Group 4 Mean (1501-2000)	Group 5 Mean (2001-3000)	Group 6 Mean (3001-4500)	Group 7 Mean (En. Over 4501)
Item 1	6	169	2.17	.05	3.20	4.12	3.80	3.72	4.05	3.69	4.27
Item 2	6	170	1.41	n. s.	3.13	3.76	3.56	3.56	3.80	3.30	3.86
Item 3	6	171	1.18	n. s.	3.12	3.53	3.36	3.32	3.30	2.69	3.30
Item 4	6	169	1.41	n. s.	2.56	3.36	3.00	3.20	3.25	2.77	3.09
Item 5	6	170	0.97	n. s.	2.63	3.12	2.88	3.00	3.05	2.62	2.75
Item 6	6	168	1.04	n. s.	2.50	2.70	2.54	2.72	2.40	2.31	2.23
Item 7	6	168	0.73	n. s.	2.87	3.12	2.96	2.96	2.80	2.92	2.59
Item 8	6	168	1.13	n. s.	3.13	3.94	3.88	3.68	3.73	3.62	3.75
Item 9	6	170	2.78	.01	2.75	3.85	3.80	3.32	3.50	3.38	3.43
Item 10	6	171	0.98	n. s.	3.59	3.97	3.88	3.52	4.00	3.62	3.66

Oneway Analysis of Variance of Selected Methods of Publication with Enrollment of Institutions

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Table 2

11

Participants were asked to indicate one of five possible categories for degrees offered. These categories were: two year or associate degree; four year or baccalaureate degree; fifth year or masters degree; sixth year or specialist degree; and, seventh year or doctorate degree.

A oneway analysis of variance across selected methods of publication with institutions arranged by highest degree offered indicated that data were significant at the .05 level in all but three (3) items. Institutions offerings the doctorate rated item 1 and item 2 at 4.58 and 4.0 respectively while junior or community colleges offering only the associate degree rated the same items at 3.13 and 3.06 respectively. Institutions offering the associate degree gave their highest ratings to item 10 with a mean score of 3.42. Table 3 gives the results from the oneway analysis of variance of selected methods of publication across highest degree offered.

	DF Between Groups	DF Between Groups	F Ratio	Significance	Highest Degree Offered Associate	Highest Degree Offered Baccalaureate	Highest Degree Offered Masters	Highest Degree Offered Specialists	Highest Degree Offered Doctorate
Item 1	6	164	11.00	.000	3.13	4.08	4.41	4.21	4.58
Item 2	4	164	7.00	.000	3.06	3.78	4.16	3.634	4.00
Item 3	4	164	2.60	.04	2.98	3.51	3.59	2.16	3.16
Item 4	4	163	2.83	.03	2.81	3.29	3.44	3.11	2.74
Item 5	4	164	3.11	.02	2.75	3.10	3.16	2.84	2.32
Item 6	4	162	1.78	n s	2.46	2.69	2.44	2.44	1.94
Item 7	4	162	1.10	n s	2.79	3.04	3.06	2.67	2.53
Item 8	4	162	3.13	.02	3.31	3.90	4.13	3.72	3.68
Item 9	4	164	2.49	.04	3.10	3.69	3.66	3.63	3.42
Item 10	4	164	1.93	n s	3.42	3.90	3.91	3.84	3.79

Oneway Analysis of Variance of Selected Methods of Publication with Highest Degree Awarded

Table 3

Summary and Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that college administrators do, indeed, perceive selected methods of publications as having varying degrees of significance relative to promotion of individual faculty members. Refereed journal articles were rated highest while an article or book appearing in print at the personal expense of the author received the lowest ratings.

Seven of the ten selected methods of publication were rated significantly different at the .05 level when institutions were categorized by highest degree offered. Institutions offering the doctorate placed a high value on publication in a national and/or regional refereed journal while rating an article placed in a periodical accepting articles on the basis of paid subscription as having the least value. The lowest ratings on all items were given by junior or community colleges offering the associate degree. The mean averages tended to increase dramatically with institutions having a graduate program. The mean range varied more between junior colleges offering the associate degree than between the institutions offering the baccalaureate and institutions offering graduate degrees. Generally, institutions were consistent in placing their highest value on refereed journals. Papers presented at conferences usually followed refereed journals as highly significant publications. Books accepted for publication, ERIC reports, and articles written for popular magazines followed in the ranking hierarchy.

Results of the study indicated no significant difference between college administrators in publicly and privately supported institutions relative to the ten selected methods of publication.

When an analysis of variance was run comparing college administrators from various size institutions on the ten selected methods of publication, only item 1 and item 9 showed significance at the .05 level. Usually, the larger institutions rated item 9 and item 1 higher than smaller institutions.

It is interesting to note that almost without exception institutions rated publications at the author's expense very low whether in the form of an article or book. Great value was placed on the judgment of the professor's peer group — or articles accepted on the basis of editorial review by a review panel. It would appear that college administrators place a great deal of value on the judgment of peers.

Similarly, a textbook published at the expense of the author received a very low rating while a textbook published at the expense of a commercial company received a considerably higher rating. It may be that college administrators perceive that decisions to publish a textbook by commercial companies are made on the basis of scholarly merit. However, there is evidence from the literature which suggests that commercial companies publish on the basis of (1) the supply and demand of books within a particular field and (2) the potential market for a specific work rather than on the basis of literary merit.

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